

# St. Joseph's Healthcare System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## ***Hospitals Form Northern NJ's Largest Behavioral Health Network:***

### **Trinitas & St. Joseph's Improve Access to Mental Health Care Services in New Jersey**

ELIZABETH, NJ - In response to the rapidly growing need for more coordinated mental health care services in New Jersey, Trinitas Regional Medical Center and St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center have launched the largest and most comprehensive ***Integrated Behavioral Health Network*** in Northern New Jersey. The new partnership will enhance access and continuity of care by ensuring patients receive services in the most appropriate setting for their complex behavioral health needs.

"One of the greatest challenges facing patients with mental health and substance health needs is getting into the right program -- that can offer them the greatest benefit," explains Dr. Carlos Rueda, Regional Chairman of Psychiatry/Behavioral Health of the new Trinitas-St. Joseph's Behavioral Health Network. "Both Trinitas and St. Joseph's offer a comprehensive array of behavioral health treatment centers, programs and services at dozens of outpatient and satellite facilities throughout the region. Now together, our newly combined network dramatically expands those access points and the opportunities for enhanced outcomes."

According to a report released in October 2016 by the New Jersey Hospital Association, patients with mental health and substance use disorders account for nearly half of the growth in

hospital emergency room cases in New Jersey and are far outpacing the overall growth in emergency department use. The report goes on to note that treating individuals suffering from a mental health crisis in the emergency department can place stress on the patient and is not the best setting to handle their complex needs. At the same time, it places increased strain within the emergency department, adding to overcrowding, long waits and increased healthcare costs.

The Trinitas-St. Joseph's network includes primary medical care in the behavioral health continuum to engage patients at the onset of mental health and substance use issues, allowing for earlier diagnosis and referral in to the best possible treatment options.

An alarming report from the Centers for Disease Control contends that life expectancy for psychiatric patients is 25 years less than it is for non-psychiatric patients. "Mental health care has always been delivered in silos, with little regard to primary care," explained James McCreath, Vice President of Behavioral Health at Trinitas and Executive Director of the Network. "This dilemma is now being addressed by our two full-service hospitals, each with a broad range of medical specialties and behavioral health expertise." The lack of primary care among the mental health population has been recognized by the federal government, which recently awarded Trinitas a 4 year, \$1.6 million grant to operate a primary care clinic in their mental health center. "St. Joe's has also shown leadership in this arena, as evidenced by their new relationship with a major area primary care physicians' practice," he added.

"By joining our two behavioral health programs, we now offer expanded access and treatment for patients that will move care away from emergency departments and into more appropriate settings," says Gary Horan, President & CEO, Trinitas Regional Medical Center. "The size and scope of the new behavioral health network will bring multiple benefits, including improved care coordination to ensure patients and their families are connected to the right programs for their unique needs."

"As two of the leaders in the State for behavioral health care, Trinitas and St. Joseph's are exceptionally positioned to respond to the growing mental health needs of New Jersey residents," says Kevin Slavin, President & CEO, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center. "The strength of our new network will not only increase access to care in appropriate settings across three counties, it will result in better outcomes for patients as they move away from the current short-term acute care focus with independent services and programs, to a more patient-centered connected network designed to improve long-term health status."

#### **Benefits of Trinitas-St. Joseph's Behavioral Health:**

- Connected services cover a larger geographic region (Union, Passaic & Essex Counties)
- Addresses the needs of all behavioral health groups - children, adolescents, adults and the elderly, as well as individuals with addiction or developmental disorders
- Reduces demands on emergency personnel and the cost of care
- Supports the shift to population health outcomes and value-based payment models

- Enhanced ability to partner with Health Plans/Insurers to improve access and care
- Expanded delivery and treatment approaches, such as telepsychiatry and medical homes
- One-Call patient access via Assessment Center and dedicated 800 Number
- Network services will be available to commercial, self-pay, Medicaid, and Medicare patients
- Multi-disciplinary treatment that includes medical, psychiatric, psychological, social work and related disciplines

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